

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS (FEHB) PREMIUMS FOR DOD CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES CALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY IN SUPPORT OF CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

By memo, subject: Human Resource Policy to Assist DoD Civilian Employees Called to Active Duty, dated March 8, 2001, and with the provisions of section 519 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, The Deputy Secretary of Defense established a policy that the Department of Defense (DoD) would pay the employee's share in addition to the government share of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premium for any covered employee who is called to active duty in support of a “**contingency operation**”. Section 519 also provides the authority to make retroactive payments to eligible employees who were called to duty on or after December 8, 1995. In order to be eligible for payment of the employee's share of the FEHB premium the employee must:

- Be enrolled in FEHB and elect to continue that enrollment
- Be a member of the Army or Air National Guard of the United States
- Be called or ordered to duty (voluntarily or involuntarily) in support of a contingency operation as defined in Section 101(a)(13) of Title 10 United States Code. Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Noble Eagle. Executive Order is 13223.
- Be placed on leave without pay (LWOP) or separated from service to perform active duty.
- Serve on active duty for a period of more than 30 consecutive days and maximum period of eligibility for each period of active duty is 18 months

The 18-month period begins the first full pay period a technician is placed on leave without pay (LWOP), separated or furloughed to serve in the Armed Forces Reserves.

The FEHB premiums paid prospectively on behalf of employees serving in support of contingency operations are not considered taxable wages and will have no additional tax withholding liability.

You can choose to terminate your coverage at any time during the 18 months of continued coverage, EXCEPT when a technician is participating in premium conversion. Premium conversion is when the federal government is not taxing the cost of your FEHB premium. However, the start and end of an unpaid leave of absence is a qualifying life event which means that within 60 days of beginning your LWOP, you have the option to terminate your coverage and or waive your participation in premium conversion.

A termination of FEHB coverage **is not** considered a break in coverage for meeting the five-year requirement for continuing FEHB into retirement.

FEHB is reinstated on the day you return to duty.